

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 4 MARCH 2019 at 7pm
in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors: Peter Adamson, Keri Bidgood, Gill Clark, Tracey Dyson, Amanda Edwards, Julie Holt (Chair), Mark Lewis, Beverley Lucas, Perry Morgan, Allen Rees, Nick Simmons, Glyn Smith, Bernard Wall, Graham White, Trudy Williams

Officers: Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk

Others: Councillor Nigel Daniels, Leader of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC)
Councillor Garth Collier, Deputy Leader of BGCBC
David Watkins, Team Manager, Leisure Services and Facilities, BGCBC
Niall Griffiths, South Wales Argus

224 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies received from Councillors Roger Clark, Gary Oakley and Rob Phillips.

225 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal or pecuniary interests.

226 BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT

The Chair made a statement as to the context of this meeting.

- This is a regular planned meeting and not a meeting to directly discuss budgets or the precepts.
- Council had a meeting on 24th October 2018 with reps from Blaeanu Gwent and it was agreed to meet twice a year to discuss issues of mutual interest.
- The Community Council had met on 16 January 2019, it had received 3 budget proposals, a standstill budget from the Clerk of £135k, an increased budget from Councillor Oakley of £234k and an increased budget of £145k from Councillor Bard.
- Councillor Oakley had made it clear at that meeting that his budget of £234k represented an annual charge of £30 for most houses in the Abertillery and Llanhilleth area. Most houses currently pay £17 per year. The increase would mean that the average house in our area, which is in band A, would pay £13 a year more than they do now, which is approximately £1 a month, which is less than the price of a cup of coffee.
- The Community Council's public survey had so far been returned by 94 people. 82 of those felt that the Community Council should do more and should raise the precept in order to do so. Only 4 people said they did not agree.
- 11 Councillors out of the 16 present at the meeting of 16 January 2019 voted for Councillor Oakley's proposed budget of £234k, which consists of the standstill £135k and another £98k for extra services for the benefit of all the communities in our area.
- The Council agreed to set up a working group to get costings and prioritise

which areas of spending we wish to focus on.

- That working group had met last Monday (25 February) building on the work already done by the Council's Wellbeing Working Group and will continue to meet over the next few weeks with final proposals to come before full Council at the end of March.
- Tonight is the perfect opportunity to discuss with the BGCBC reps areas of mutual interest, so that we can build on partnership working, going forward.

The Chair invited Councillor Daniels to update us on any areas of interest to the Community Council. Councillor Daniels invited questions from Community Councillors.

Playgrounds Review

A question was asked about the BGCBC Review of Playgrounds and the lack of Consultation with ALCC.

Councillor Daniels responded:

- The County Borough had a Play Strategy from 2004 till 2009, and since then there had been no constructive mechanism for play areas.
- Our area was well served in that Cwmtillery had 17 play areas, yet Georgetown in Tredegar only had 2.
- During the review the borough council had use the ratio of 1 playground per 250 children to plan for future provision.
- The budget for playgrounds is £46k per year.
- 14,000 children in borough area in 2004, now 12,000.
- Overall will reduce play areas from 53 to 38.
- Education budget is ring fenced and cannot be used for playgrounds.

BGCBC/Local Councils Charter

A question was asked about the current charter between Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and the four Town and Community Councils, regarding Blaenau Gwent not fulfilling their part of the charter.

Councillor Daniels responded:

- It is right and proper that Town and Community Councils have a right to comment on issues.
- This issue has now been transferred to the Policy and Engagement group at the Borough Council, being led by Bernadette Elias, who Councillor Daniels has the utmost respect for.
- The future focus will be on strategy and outcomes.
- There has been frustration of the perceived lack of engagement on both sides.
- Main strategic areas to consider are Future Generations and Well Being.
- Meeting on 27 February between Borough and the four town councils to look at charter and better ways of working together in partnership.
- There has been CAT engagement with over 90 sporting clubs.

Car parking in Abertillery Town Centre

A question was asked about car parking in Abertillery Town Centre.

Councillor Daniels and Councillor Collier responded:

- Could not discuss Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council's proposal as the issue of keeping the multi-storey Car Park in Division Street open beyond 7pm involves Health and Safety and resourcing aspects for Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- Three sites in Abertillery: Cross Street, King Street and one other are having yellow lines removed, which will free up other parking spaces. This is part of a wider Bleanau Gwent scheme across the whole County Borough area.

Litter Fines

A question was asked about the use of a private company in enforcing litter fines.

Councillor Daniels responded:

- There were some commercial sensitivities around answering the question but Blaenau Gwent were reviewing this as part of a wider Borough Council review of services.

Anti-Social behaviour

A question was asked about the increase in Anti-Social behaviour in Abertillery Town Centre.

Councillor Daniels responded:

- There is a small minority that are causing problems
- Wider CCTV coverage may not help as sometimes youths act up in front of the cameras
- Council Litter picker who closes gates now has to wear a Body Cam because of some Anti-Social behaviour toward him
- There is no easy solution

Recycling centre at Bournville

Councillor Daniels responded:

- The new recycling centre was due to go before planning on 7th March.
- A set of traffic lights is planned at the junction with the A467.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk